

Exercise is one of the few activities you can do that can improve every aspect of your life, body and mind. Most major organizations (Center for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), American Heart Association (AHA)) have essentially identical exercise recommendations for adults:

- a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-cardiovascular exercise (equivalent to brisk walking/modest jogging) a day, most days of the week. In addition, individuals should try to incorporate resistance exercise (weight lifting) into their routine. The American Heart Association goes on to say that individuals trying to lose weight or maintain weight loss should aim for 60-90 minutes of cardiovascular exercise a day, and that individuals looking to further improve their physical fitness and reduce their risk of disease may benefit from exceeding these minimum recommendations.

1. [Exercise Helps You Lose Weight and Prevent Obesity](#)

Besides watching your calories, studies show that exercise is one of the most powerful tools for weight loss. The calories you burn during cardio and strength-training help you lose weight, prevent future weight gain, and avoid obesity.

This is critical, since being overweight or obese can put you at risk for a variety of health problems such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, gallstones, depression, low self-esteem and more.

2. [Exercise Protects You from Heart Disease](#)

Heart disease is [the leading cause of death](#) for American adults. Exercise not only protects you from heart disease, it can actually change how your heart works, making it stronger, more efficient, and better able to function as you age.

3. [Diabetes Prevention and Management](#)

In the simplest terms, diabetes affects how your body digests food. Your body can't break down sugar, which leads to high glucose levels and potential health problems like nerve damage, kidney failure, vision problems, heart disease and depression.

The major risk factor for getting type 2 diabetes is being obese, which is one reason that exercise is such a powerful tool. Exercise also helps manage blood glucose levels and enhance insulin sensitivity.

4. [Exercise Lowers High Blood Pressure](#)

High blood pressure, which is considered anything over 149/90 mm Hg, can contribute to a number of health problems including coronary heart disease, stroke and congestive heart failure. Losing weight and watching your salt and alcohol intake are the best ways to lower your blood pressure, and studies have found that 3 to 5 moderate intensity workouts a week (30 to 60 minutes each) is sufficient to reduce high blood pressure. Regular exercise may even protect you from developing high blood pressure, which can be a problem as we age.

5. [Exercise Makes You Smarter](#)

Exercise not only strengthens your body, it can also strengthen your mind. Some experts believe that exercise can, in fact, keep our minds sharp because it improves circulation throughout the body and the brain, which boosts your attention and ability to concentrate.

Exercise can even make you more productive at work: People who exercise during the day perform better, manage their time more efficiently, and are mentally sharper.

6. [Exercise Gives You More Energy](#)

It may be ironic, but if you've ever felt too tired to workout, exercise is one thing that may cure you. Studies show that exercise increases feelings of energy and lessens feelings of fatigue. Exercise also teaches the body how to produce more energy, making it more efficient at burning fat.

In the news:

A recent randomized controlled study of normal older adults showed that moderate walking 40 minutes, three times a week for one year increases the size of the hippocampus, and improves memory and reduced dementia risk. The study was done by the Alzheimer's Research Forum (ARF) **www.alzforum.org**

Resources:

Bedford Recreation Department - recreation opportunities right in our own community - <http://www.bedfordma.gov/index.php/departments/recreation>

Bedford is fortunate to have lots of connectivity thru paths, conservation land, trails, and the bikeway. To help plot out your adventure see:

Minuteman Bikeway - <http://www.minutemanbikeway.org/>

Bedford Trail Maps - <http://www.bedfordma.gov/index.php/trail-maps>

Fitness Partner - Here you will find information to help you create a lifestyle change by building your knowledge-base so you can understand and apply the basic elements of fitness and weight management to your own life. It includes an activity calorie counter.
<http://www.primusweb.com/fitnesspartner/>

<http://www.mapmyride.com/> - allows you to plan bicycle routes, track your workouts, connect

with other enthusiasts all over.

Google Map Pedometer - allows you to:

- Type in a city to start. Or zoom and drag to begin where you wish to begin.
- Draw your walking route by clicking on the Google Map.
- Use map view, satellite view, or hybrid view with both streets and satellite photo.
- See the distance in miles or kilometers.

Here is an interesting article on Traffic Congestion and Health, suggesting that sitting in traffic, or inhaling exhaust from automobiles has a profound negative effect on many health issues:

<http://www.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.infrastructurist.com%2F2011%2F11%2F09%2Frush-hour-read-the-link-between-traffic-congestion-and-health%2F&h=mAQH8UGveAQH-Aj3C97d4o16VxxchDN0Xx8NqDh9v2yTQTg>